

Slaughter Announces Co-Chairmanship of Congressional Great Lakes Task Force

Bipartisan Group Will Promote Great Lakes Environmental, Infrastructure Issues

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today announced that she has been named Co-Chair of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force. The bipartisan body, composed of both Senators and Representatives, will work to promote the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem, as well as to improve infrastructure needed for environmental protection, economic growth, and the safety of the region's residents.

"The citizens of New York want to confront threats to the ecosystem of the Great Lakes, as well as threats from nature, head-on," Rep. Slaughter said. **"I am excited about working with the Task Force to set in motion the plans which will clean up our contaminated brownfields sites, protect our wildlife from further harm, defend citizens from preventable natural disasters, and harness the power of the Great Lakes as an economic catalyst for the region,"** she added.

In recent years, a lack of federal funding has hurt efforts to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem in New York from pollution, in addition to having limited infrastructure improvements needed to defend nearby residents against damage caused by storms. With 33 percent of the Great Lakes coastline, New York has received between less than ten percent of the Great Lakes program

funding over the past three years. Similarly, just 3 percent of the \$358 million that the Army Corps of Engineers spent on Great Lakes projects between 1999 and 2001 went to New York State.

With her position of influence within the Great Lakes Task Force, Rep. Slaughter will lead efforts to restore New York beaches, make our drinking water safe by upgrading treatment plants, repair wildlife habitats, and carry out needed lake infrastructure improvements.

"I'm committed to using my leadership position in this body to achieve goals now which will have long-lasting effects," she said.

BACKGROUND

The House and Senate Great Lakes Task Forces, associated with the Northeast-Midwest Coalitions, promote appropriation and authorization bills to enhance environmental quality and economic development throughout the Great Lakes basin. The bipartisan group has advanced numerous provisions within the Water Resources Development Act, fought for inclusion of Great Lakes interests in the Conservation and Reinvestment Act and other national environmental legislation, and addressed Great Lakes water diversions. Throughout the 109th Congress, the Great Lakes Task Forces will be particularly active on measures to protect against invasive species, to restore the Great Lakes ecosystem, and to provide adequate appropriations for Great Lakes programs.

There are two Senate GLTF Co-Chair positions, held by Senator Carl Levin and Senator Mike DeWine. There are four House Co-Chair positions, currently held by Representatives John Dingell, Vernon Ehlers, Mark Kirk, and Louise M. Slaughter. A complete list of the Members of Congress who compose the Task Force can be found by [clicking here](#) .